United Nations S/2014/153

Security Council

Distr.: General
5 March 2014

Original: English

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2098 (2013), in which the Council requested that I submit a report on the implementation of the commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region.[1] The report covers developments since the issuance of my report of 23 December 2013 (S/2013/773) and describes recent peace and security initiatives with regard to eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. Furthermore, the report discusses progress in the implementation of the Framework, as stipulated in paragraphs 4 and 5 of resolution 2098 (2013).

II. Recent developments

A. Political and security developments

2. During the period under review, the security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has remained volatile and was marked by sporadic attacks by various armed groups. On the political front, there was limited progress in the implementation of the Kampala Declarations, which formally ended the conflict between the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC)) and the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23). A positive development was President Kabila's promulgation, on 11 February, of the amnesty law provided for in the Kampala Declarations. The law grants amnesty for acts of insurgency, acts of war, and political offences committed

[1] In this context, the region is defined as covering the signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, namely, Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, as well as Kenya and the Sudan, which became new members on 31 January 2014. In addition, the following four intergovernmental organizations act as guarantors for the Framework: the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, the Southern African Development Community and the United Nations. For further information, see S/2013/119 and S/2013/131, annex.

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in the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo between 18 February 2006 and 20 December 2013. The two dates refer, respectively, to the promulgation of the Constitution of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the expiry of the Government's ultimatum to armed groups to lay down their arms. Those eligible for amnesty will have to pledge in writing before the Ministry of Justice, within six months of the coming into effect of the law, that they will refrain from recommitting the same offences covered by this amnesty. Any violation of this pledge will automatically disqualify the perpetrator from this and any future amnesties. Consistent with international humanitarian and human rights instruments, the law excludes from amnesty those responsible for crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and gross violations of human rights. On a separate note, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) unanimously adopted a new Code of Conduct for political parties and candidates, during its fourth consultative meeting, held on 8 January. The code was signed by the INEC and 233 political parties, as of 10 February.

3. At the regional level, some encouraging developments were observed during the period under review. On 14 and 15 January, the fifth ordinary Summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) was held in Luanda under the chairmanship of the President of Angola, José Eduardo dos Santos, who took over from the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni. The Summit took stock of the commitments undertaken under the 2006 Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, as well as the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. My Special Envoy attended the Summit, together with the Special Representative of the African Union for the Great Lakes Region, Boubacar Diarra, the Special Envoy of the United States of America for the Great Lakes Region, Russ Feingold, and the Senior Coordinator of the European Union for the Great Lakes Region, Koen Vervaeke.

4. President dos Santos outlined the priorities for Angola's two-year chairmanship of ICGLR. At the political level, he pledged to promote dialogue among the countries in the region; encourage the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development, as well as the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework; and support efforts for peaceful resolution of conflicts in the Central African Republic and South Sudan. On the economic front, he undertook to promote trade and diversification of the region's economy and to fight poverty. With regard to defence and security, President dos Santos stated that Angola would promote joint border management and improve regional cooperation on security issues, including the fight against human trafficking and the illegal exploitation of natural resources.

5. The Summit was preceded by meetings of ICGLR security and political mechanisms, held from 10 to 14 January. They included a meeting of the Chiefs of Intelligence Services; a meeting of the Chiefs of Defence staff; a meeting of the Committee of Defence Ministers; and a meeting of the Regional Inter-ministerial Committee comprised of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and National ICGLR Coordinators. The Ministers of Defence and Ministers of Foreign Affairs discussed progress in the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development and considered the report of the Expanded Joint Verification Mechanism (EJVM) on recent developments in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Furthermore, they reviewed the terms of reference of the EJVM, assessed the conflicts in South Sudan and the Central African Republic, and discussed a possible role for the EJVM in monitoring developments in both countries. In line with the recommendations

made by the Chiefs of Defence Staff at their meeting held in the United Republic of Tanzania on 7 October 2013, the EJVM now comprises 33 members, including representatives of South Africa, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the African Union. As new Chair of ICGLR, Angola will soon appoint a senior military officer to lead the EJVM.

6. The ICGLR Summit concluded with the adoption of a set of recommendations formulated by the political and security mechanisms, which included 42 decisions pertaining to eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, and the Pact on Security, Stability and Development. Key decisions related to the Framework included: (a) a request to MONUSCO to intensify its operations against the Allied Democratic Forces, the Democratic forces for the Liberation of Rwanda and other armed groups operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo; (b) a call on Member States to strengthen the EJVM and the Joint Intelligence Fusion Centre; (c) a pledge by the secretariats of ICGLR and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to implement the final communiqué of the first joint SADC-ICGLR Summit, held in Pretoria on 4 November 2013; (d) a call on the African Union and its partners to strengthen the International Support Mission in the Central African Republic; (e) a commitment to continue supporting the ongoing mediation in South Sudan by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD); an expression of support to my Special Envoy's efforts to advance the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, including through the implementation of the Plan of Action endorsed by the Regional Oversight Mechanism on 31 January; and (f) a call on Member States to respect the ICGLR Protocol on non-aggression.

7. Another significant regional development was the meeting in Kigali, on 7 and 8 January, of senior representatives of three member States of the East African Community. The Ministers of Defence and Internal Security of Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda signed and approved relevant documents for the establishment of a Mutual Defence Pact and a Mutual Peace and Security Pact between the three countries.

B. Humanitarian situation

8. While recent national, regional and international initiatives have helped reduce conflict and violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the humanitarian situation has remained precarious in much of the region. Further information on the humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo can be found in my separate report on MONUSCO.

C. Update on human rights, child protection and sexual and gender-based violence

9. As part of the Framework's focus on protecting and empowering women in the Great Lakes region, the World Bank Group is developing a regional Great Lakes women's health and empowerment project to provide: (a) holistic services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence; (b) high impact basic health and nutrition services; and (c) research, networking and regional knowledge-sharing.

The project is expected to be approved by June 2014 and will complement existing national and regional programmes.

III. Implementation of the commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region

A. Commitments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

10. During the reporting period, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo made some progress in implementing its national commitments, as detailed in my separate report on MONUSCO. However, nine months after the establishment of the National Oversight Mechanism, this important institution operates with limited material and human resources and has yet to adopt its workplan and rules of procedure. Furthermore, the Consultative Council of the National Oversight Mechanism, which brings together representatives of different sectors, including public institutions and civil society, has yet to hold its first meeting. Nevertheless, the Executive Committee of the National Oversight Mechanism is gradually advancing the benchmarking process, which will form the basis for an action plan and the formulation of priority programmes.

11. On 13 January, the Coordinator of the Executive Committee of the National Oversight Mechanism requested MONUSCO to help organize a workshop to refine benchmarks and indicators for the six national commitments under the Framework. On 23 January, my Deputy Special Representative and Resident Coordinator met with the Coordinator of the National Oversight Mechanism, François Mwamba, to discuss how to co-organize the proposed workshop. Tentatively scheduled for late February, the workshop seeks to promote an inclusive process and lay the groundwork for a deeper partnership between the National Oversight Mechanism and various stakeholders, including the donor community, known in Kinshasa as the Groupe de Coordination des Partenaires.

12. Meanwhile, on 26 December 2013, at a meeting the Cabinet adopted the Government's third national disarmament demobilization and reintegration Plan, which is now pending before the President. In its present form, the plan proposes a budget of $US 99,574,416, currently unfunded, to demobilize an estimated 14,805 combatants and include some 24,410 individuals in the reintegration process in war-affected areas. The Government also announced its intention to seek support from MONUSCO to form a Steering Committee to implement the new programme.

13. Following the recovery of areas previously occupied by M23 in North Kivu, MONUSCO supported government efforts to restore state authority, notably by assisting with the deployment of state actors to those areas to prevent a relapse into conflict. As part of this process, some 950 elements of the Police nationale congolaise and provincial Ministries have already redeployed to Rutshuru and Kiwanja.

14. MONUSCO and international partners also continued to encourage the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to adopt a plan for army reform and articulate a national defence strategy. As part of continued efforts to enhance the capacity of the FARDC, MONUSCO deployed military trainers to the

Tactical Training Centre in Kisangani. MONUSCO Brigades also provided mentoring and training to FARDC units in North Kivu, South Kivu and the Ituri District in Orientale province. The FARDC delay in designating trainee units in Kisangani has impeded further progress and prevented the vetting of the FARDC rapid reaction units during the reporting period.

15. In his address to the nation on 31 December 2013, President Joseph Kabila stressed the need to accelerate the decentralization process, including the progressive establishment of new provinces, the devolution of financial services from the central Government to the provinces, and the prompt establishment of the Caisse nationale de péréquation (National Stabilization Fund).

16. On 26 December 2013, the Comité de suivi des concertations nationales (National Dialogue Follow-up Committee), co-chaired by National Assembly Speaker Aubin Minaku and Senate President Leon Kengo, adopted its rules of procedure and identified its priorities. The Committee, which consists of parliamentarians and representatives of civil society organizations, is expected to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the *concertations nationales* (national dialogue). Together with my Special Envoy and other partners, MONUSCO has consistently underscored the need to align the functions and activities of the National Oversight Mechanism with those of the National Dialogue Follow-up Committee.

B. Commitments of the region and development of benchmarks and action plan

17. In line with the recommendations of the ICGLR technical colloquium on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, held in June 2013, and the Plan of Action endorsed by the Regional Oversight Mechanism on 31 January, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and MONUSCO conducted working-level consultations on a regional mechanism for disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement. Most urgently, viable and attractive alternatives must be provided to the former M23 combatants present in Uganda and Rwanda. To that effect, MONUSCO conducted a visit to Uganda late in January and noted ongoing steps by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to repatriate children separated from M23 to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda. The Ugandan authorities indicated that, between 10 and 16 December, the Ugandan People's Defence Forces had disarmed and regrouped 1,325 former M23 combatants in Kasese, Uganda. Of those individuals, 117 were adult females and 134 were children. The MONUSCO delegation also discussed the establishment of a working-level mechanism on disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement that would include the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and the United Nations.

18. At its fifth meeting, held on 7-8 January in Nairobi, under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union, the Technical Support Committee of the Regional Oversight Mechanism finalized the draft Plan of Action for the implementation of regional commitments. The plan identifies 15 priorities encompassing the seven regional commitments that the Governments of the region have committed to implement in 2014. While the plan is a living document that will be updated as necessary, its initial implementation time frame is one year from its

adoption. The members of the Committee also agreed to monitor the implementation of the Plan of Action, with technical support from the Office of my Special Envoy. The Committee resolved to discuss the costing and funding implications of that decision at its next meeting.

19. On 31 January, the Regional Oversight Mechanism held its third meeting in Addis Ababa, on the margins of the 22nd African Union Summit. The meeting was co-chaired by Erastus Mwencha, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations. In attendance were my Special Envoy, my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, other senior officials from regional and international organizations, and representatives of the Security Council.

20. The Regional Oversight Mechanism reviewed progress in the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, almost a year after its signing. It approved the Plan of Action for the implementation of the regional commitments and welcomed Kenya and the Sudan as new signatories. The Regional Oversight Mechanism further endorsed my Special Envoy's initiative to organize, together with the ICGLR, a private sector investment forum later this year. Moreover, the meeting welcomed the launch of my Special Envoy's initiative, the Great Lakes Women's Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Eliasson, urged all signatories to remain committed and underscored the need for a comprehensive strategy to address the root causes of conflict and promote dialogue in the region.

21. In the final communiqué of the meeting, the Regional Oversight Mechanism renewed its commitment to the Framework and called for the immediate implementation of the Plan of Action. The leaders requested the Technical Support Committee to submit at their next meeting, through my Special Envoy and the Special Representative of the African Union for the Great Lakes region, a progress report on the implementation of the Plan of Action. The Regional Oversight Mechanism also requested my Special Envoy to consult signatories on ways to sustain dialogue between the leaders of the region.

22. Furthermore, the Regional Oversight Mechanism urged the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to extend its authority to all areas and strengthen its security and judicial institutions. The meeting encouraged countries in the region to join forces to neutralize illegal armed groups, combat impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity, conflict-related sexual violence, and other gross violations of human rights. It also urged Governments to take appropriate action against persons falling under the United Nations sanctions regime.

C. International commitments

23. During the reporting period, my Special Envoy continued her close cooperation with the Team of Envoys and the International Contact Group on the Great Lakes Region, and the chairpersons of ICGLR and SADC. In particular, her Office worked closely with the members of the International Contact Group on the Great Lakes Region to finalize benchmarks for the implementation of the international commitments under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

24. In line with the outcome of my joint visit to the Great Lakes region with the President of the World Bank, Jim Yong Kim, in May of last year, my Special Envoy deepened cooperation with the World Bank and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In this context, her Office partnered with the World Bank, and UNDP headquarters and relevant country offices, to ensure that economic activities under the Plan of Action complement the outcomes of the meeting on "Regional Approaches to Development in the Countries of the Great Lakes", co-organized by the World Bank, the United Nations and the African Union Commission in July 2013.

25. In response to the pressing need to reform the community recovery sector and link community recovery to local development in the Great Lakes region, UNDP hosted a three-day workshop in Bujumbura on 17 February. The workshop provided an opportunity for representatives of governments in the Great Lakes region, industry, civil society, academia and the international donor community to discuss the challenges and opportunities that community recovery presents in the region, and how responsible community recovery can contribute to economic growth, environmental protection and social equity at the local level. The workshop was designed to stimulate reflection and discussion on sustainable community recovery practices, facilitate networking, and deliver broad consensus on approaches to link community recovery and local development.

IV. Activities of my Special Envoy

26. My Special Envoy has continued to engage regional leaders, bilateral and multilateral partners, and civil society organizations to ensure that the broadest possible range of actors remains committed to the Framework. In addition, she launched a number of initiatives derived from her six-point plan, which I introduced in my last report (S/2013/773, para. 24).

27. After the signing of the Kampala Dialogue Declarations and Communiqué, my Special Envoy consistently engaged regional leaders, urging swift implementation of the parties' commitments, starting with the passing of an amnesty law in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. As indicated earlier in this report (para. 2), this important legislation has now been promulgated. My Special Envoy has also been calling for the implementation of an effective disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to enable the repatriation of former M23 combatants of Congolese nationality from Rwanda and Uganda.

28. From 11 to 13 January, my Special Envoy visited Kinshasa to assess and aid progress in the implementation of the national commitments made by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She met with President Kabila, other government officials, and the donor community. In her meetings with government officials, she urged swift implementation of the outcomes of the Kampala Dialogue, stressed the need to strengthen the National Oversight Mechanism, and suggested a road map for broader national reconciliation, as a follow-up to the national dialogue. In response, the Government reiterated its readiness to implement its national commitments. My Special Envoy, Mary Robinson, briefed donors on ongoing activities related to the regional commitments and Plan of Action. She further noted the efforts made by international partners to coordinate their support to the Framework.

29. My Special Envoy returned to Kinshasa on 12 and 13 February to discuss the outcomes of the last meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism and evaluate progress in the implementation of the Framework since her last visit. She met President Kabila and Foreign Minister Raymond Tshibanda. She also met the Coordinator of the National Oversight Mechanism who briefed her on the formulation of benchmarks for the implementation of national commitments. My Special Envoy took advantage of her presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to reach out to the donor community, notably the Executive Committee of the Groupe de Coordination des Partenaires. Together with my Special Representative Kobler, she met diplomatic representatives of SADC countries and held consultations with the Senior Coordinator of the European Union for the Great Lakes Region, Koen Vervaeke.

30. After Kinshasa, my Special Envoy proceeded to Luanda for a three-day visit, during which she met President dos Santos, as well as the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and the Economy. During her meeting with President dos Santos on 18 February, my Special Envoy commended the leadership displayed by the President since assuming the chairmanship of ICGLR. She also encouraged him to pursue the dialogue on sensitive issues that he initiated during the fifth ordinary Summit of ICGLR in Luanda. President dos Santos briefed my Special Envoy on the priorities that he and his peers identified during the closed meeting that he convened in mid-January, on the margins of the ICGLR Summit. These include (a) repatriation of M23 elements in the context of the Kampala Declarations; (b) operations against the Allied Democratic Forces; and (c) operations against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda. He further noted that he would concentrate on promoting sustained political dialogue between the leaders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda. Lastly, he welcomed my Special Envoy's plan to hold a private sector investment conference in June, preceded by regional consultations to be hosted by Angola in May.

31. To help build trust and confidence in the region, my Special Envoy has taken steps to initiate a high-level political dialogue to discuss complex issues falling under the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. She shared her proposal with regional leaders during the recent ICGLR Summit in Luanda. At its third meeting, on 31 January, the Regional Oversight Mechanism considered that proposal and undertook to support broad political dialogue on issues of mutual concern.

32. In line with her commitment to promote a bottom-up approach to the Framework, my Special Envoy took advantage of her presence in Addis Ababa for the third meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism to reach out to civil society organizations. On 28 January, she launched the Great Lakes Women's Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, with the support of the Global Fund for Women. The ceremony was attended by over 100 participants representing Governments, the United Nations, other multilateral institutions, civil society, women's organizations, and foundations. The Platform aims to support the active involvement of women in the Framework and to ensure that their voices and aspirations are effectively communicated across the region, in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

33. Participants at the launching ceremony agreed that the Women's Platform should: (a) take concrete actions to improve the lives of girls and women in the region; (b) ensure that girls and women are at the centre of efforts to bring peace,

security and development to the region; (c) collaborate with other national and regional mechanisms, particularly the ICGLR Regional Women's Forum; and (d) develop measurable indicators to evaluate its own impact.

34. Over the next three years, the Platform will carry out three core activities: (a) providing grant support to women's rights organizations; (b) convening grant recipients for collective action and shared learning; (c) disseminating the accomplishments of women's groups; and (d) advocating for increased resources for women's groups and community-based mechanisms. The Platform will also provide technical support to women's groups active in the following four areas: (a) monitoring and advocacy for the Framework, and regional and national plans of action under Security Council resolution 1325 (2000); (b) combating conflict-related violence against women and supporting victims; (c) improving women's livelihoods and development; and (d) promoting access to clean energy at the local level.

35. Prior to launching the Women's Platform, my Special Envoy participated in a consultative dialogue with civil society organizations, hosted by Oxfam International, on 27 January. The event was attended by some 55 representatives of international, regional, national and local organizations working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. The dialogue provided an opportunity to discuss the roles and responsibilities of civil society in the implementation of the Framework. Noting civil society's role in holding Governments to their commitments, my Special Envoy requested civil society organizations to help disseminate these commitments and track progress in their implementation. She reiterated her commitment to a bottom-up approach and reaffirmed her resolve to remain engaged with civil society groups. To this effect, she proposed that consultative dialogues on the Framework with non-governmental organizations and other non-state actors become a regular feature on the margins of African Union Summits.

V. Observations and recommendations

36. When the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework was signed on 24 February 2013 in Addis Ababa, the peace and security situation in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo was fragile. Tension among the countries in the region was, once again, on the rise. A year after signing the Framework, the situation on the ground, though relatively delicate, has improved considerably, owing to a number of concerted national, regional and international efforts. On the military front, following the end of the M23 rebellion and the formal conclusion of the Kampala Dialogue, the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is now able to regain control of territories previously held by M23 and has commenced new operations against foreign armed groups operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, such as the Allied Democratic Forces, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda and the Forces nationales de libération. The defeat of M23 has also led to the spontaneous surrender of elements from other armed groups, which now need to be sustained by effective demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programmes, at the national and regional levels.

37. On the political front, the signatories to the Framework have taken crucial steps to establish the required mechanisms and tools for effective implementation of their commitments. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, President Joseph

Kabila established a National Oversight Mechanism to oversee the implementation of the national commitments. In addition, he launched the *concertations nationales* (national dialogue), involving the majority of political parties. He also established a follow-up committee, co-chaired by the Presidents from both chambers of the National Assembly to monitor the implementation of its outcome.

38. At the regional level, signatory countries have displayed a greater sense of ownership in finding solutions to the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and improving relations in the region. In that regard, President Yoweri Museveni, in his capacity as the Chair of ICGLR, played a key role in facilitating the resolution of the conflict between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and M23, through the Kampala Dialogue. Furthermore, the frequent interactions between the principal representatives of the Heads of State and Government through the organ of the Technical Support Committee, with the support of my Special Envoy, provided a useful platform for dialogue, consensus and trust building in the development of regional benchmarks, which were adopted last September, and the Plan of Action for the implementation of the regional commitments, which was endorsed during the third meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism in Addis Ababa on 31 January 2014.

39. Leaders in the region further demonstrated their resolve to promote closer regional cooperation by holding a joint ICGLR-SADC Summit, during which discussions focused on peace and stability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. The decision reached at that Summit, to organize annual joint Summits and convene foreign ministers every six months, illustrates the growing political will in the region to exploit synergies in the pursuit of common objectives.

40. Meanwhile, coherent and coordinated messaging and support by international partners remain critical to support those positive efforts and developments in the region. As indicated in my previous reports, I welcome the continuous commitment of the international community to work closely with my Special Envoy in support of the Framework, notably through the coordinated efforts of the Team of Envoys, and the engagement of some partners at the local and regional levels. I commend the leaders in the region, their representatives at the Technical Support Committee, the Executive Secretaries of ICGLR and SADC and international partners for their efforts to implement the Framework over the past year.

41. Although these important steps have contributed to creating a foundation for peace and security, it is nonetheless important to emphasize the enormous amount of work that still lies ahead to achieve the overall objectives of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and address the root causes of conflict in the Great Lakes region. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region still face a number of peace and security challenges which, if not properly addressed, could negatively affect the progress achieved thus far.

42. I am particularly concerned about the series of armed attacks perpetrated in Kinshasa, Lubumbashi and Kindu on 30 December. I also deplore the heavy loss of lives during the operations carried out by security forces in the aftermath of those attacks. These armed attacks indicate that the road to national cohesion and reconciliation remains difficult, despite the recent encouraging efforts of the Government. The lack of operational capacity of the National Oversight Mechanism, delays in the implementation of recommendations of the national dialogue as well as the absence of a single harmonized road map for the

implementation of national reforms are of serious concern and need to be addressed swiftly. The implementation of the key points agreed upon during the Kampala Dialogue also deserves urgent and immediate attention, in addition to measures to implement the amnesty law recently promulgated by President Kabila.

43. While I am mindful of the complexity and sensitivities of the issues at stake, I encourage the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to accelerate the implementation of its commitments under the Framework, the recommendations of the national dialogue, and the declarations concluding the Kampala Dialogue. I also urge the Government to seek support from international partners for security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and elections. Constructive dialogue with the neighbours of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will also be essential to accelerate the repatriation of the former M23 combatants present in Uganda and Rwanda. My Special Envoy, Mary Robinson, and my Special Representative, Martin Kobler, stand ready to assist the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in this endeavour, as appropriate.

44. With the adoption of the regional benchmarks and the plan of action, the region now has effective tools to guide the implementation of its commitments and to measure progress accordingly. I urge the signatory countries of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework to take concrete steps to move this process forward. In line with the communiqué of the last meeting of the Regional Oversight Mechanism, I call on countries in the region to cooperate and take the necessary measures to neutralize illegal armed groups, combat impunity for war crimes, crimes against humanity, conflict-related sexual violence and other gross violations of human rights, and to take appropriate actions against persons falling under the United Nations sanctions regime.

45. I am concerned about continuing reports of violence, including sexual violence, by armed forces and by illegal armed groups in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and in other parts of the region, such as the Central African Republic and South Sudan. I would like to urge all signatories to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework to fully implement their commitments, including those related to the fight against impunity for serious crimes and their obligation to neither harbour nor provide protection to persons accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of genocide or crimes of aggression. I urge Heads of State in the region to address the question of judicial cooperation and accountability as a matter of utmost priority and ensure that people suspected of committing heinous crimes and serious human rights violations are held accountable.

46. The issue of the return of refugees and internally displaced persons remains a major humanitarian concern and a driver of conflict in the region. Accordingly, no effort should be spared to find lasting solutions through coordinated action at the national, regional and international levels. My Special Envoy will continue to work with mandated agencies in that regard. I call on Governments in the region to enhance their collaboration on the refugee issue in the context of the tripartite agreements, while keeping in mind their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law.

47. In that regard, I would like to commend President José Eduardo dos Santos, of Angola, who, as the new Chair of ICGLR, has commenced his tenure by displaying leadership in engaging his peers to address sensitive peace and security issues, as demonstrated during the recent ICGLR Summit held in Luanda. I welcome the

renewed engagement of Angola in the Great Lakes region and encourage President dos Santos and his Government to work closely with my Special Envoy, who has already offered to work closely with the leaders of the region to support broad political dialogue on difficult issues that could hamper the effective implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.

48. Building on the efforts of the past year, my Special Envoy will continue to steer the process of promoting the full implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, in line with the Plan of Action and her six-point plan that I presented in my last report. In that regard, my Special Envoy will concentrate on the following issues in the next few months: support dialogue on sensitive regional issues, including the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, and the repatriation of eligible former M23 combatants present in neighbouring countries, working closely with the Chair of ICGLR; encourage ICGLR to work closely with the National Oversight Mechanism to track progress in the implementation of the Kampala Declaration; mobilize key countries in the region and international partners to strengthen the capacity of the EJVM, in order to effectively conduct its investigation and monitoring mandate; organize a private sector investment conference to promote the social and economic pillars of the Framework; work with civil society organizations, Governments and donors to operationalize the Women's Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, with a view to ensuring greater participation at the grass-roots level and maximizing the considerable potential of a bottom-up approach; and mobilize international and regional support to establish a regional training facility on sexual and gender-based violence.

49. However, it must be stressed that these efforts will produce results only if the signatory countries and the guarantors of the Framework remain committed to achieving the goals we set for ourselves a year ago. I would like to thank my Special Envoy, Mary Robinson, my Special Representative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Martin Kobler, and all the staff of peacekeeping and special political missions in the region, for their efforts in challenging and complex environments. I call on the members of the Security Council and other international partners to continue to provide support to my Special Envoy and my Special Representative to ensure the effective implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework.